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COMMUNICATIONS

To the Editor:

In regard to the attack of Superintendent Morrison upon the New England College Entrance Certificate Board, commented upon in the *April School Review*, the following facts are of interest. This is not a defense (fair-minded school men do not think the Board needs one), nor is it official, although the writer was a substitute member last year, when the action was taken which arouses Mr. Morrison's wrath.

Mr. Morrison stated that if one out of a hundred pupils certificated to college failed, privileges would be withdrawn. They would not be withdrawn. He says the Dover High School was "summarily dropped," yet it received a just warning in 1911 for three failures, a second in 1912 for five failures, and was dropped in 1913 for total failure of four of thirteen pupils certificated, and for course failures in five of the seven subjects certificated and continued in college.

He complains that the Board is autocratic, yet in 1912 and 1913, 97 per cent of the schools applying for the use of the certificate privilege were granted it; 460 schools were approved and 11 were refused—evidently the Dover High School has few companions.

Mr. Morrison would have this Board "responsible to the states." Should not the states then pay the bills of the colleges concerned? Maine pays over \$160,000 a year for its state university, which Mr. Morrison praises; eleven of the colleges on the Board do not receive a cent of state aid.

Poor college instruction in the Freshman year is the cause of students' failures, again explains the New Hampshire superintendent. Perhaps in part; is it worse than the average instruction in high school? At Bowdoin half the Freshman faculty has had experience in high-school teaching and the average length of their college teaching is fourteen years.

He lauds the University of Maine (which is doing splendid service to the state) for receiving practically any graduate of a high school. Maine high-school principals are not fully convinced that the boy who receives their diploma is thereby shown to be proper college material. In Maine many high schools are grateful for the high demands of certain of these "autocratic" colleges, because they serve to raise and maintain real standards in the secondary schools.

The new courses in the New Hampshire high schools, largely the result of Mr. Morrison's changes, deserve praise as forerunners and guides for other secondary schools. One college at least (Bowdoin) is striving now to find a place in its halls for a boy prepared in such a true "people's college."

College and school must unite; no one denies the past arrogance of the colleges. Such attacks as Mr. Morrison's, however, will not help in bringing school and college together.

JAMES LUKENS McCONAUGHY

To the Editor:

In the November, 1913, *School Review*, M. Locard has an article entitled "French in the Public High Schools." In trying to demonstrate that conversational French is inadvisable, M. Locard affirms: "It seems rational to say that French nationality, backed by education and experience, is the absolute requisite for any person who claims to teach French. A German, an American, a Japanese may have mastered the language to some extent, but with few exceptions, the standard of his pronunciation will always be below that of any mature Frenchman." Thus are we to conclude that the requisite for teaching French pronunciation is a good pronunciation? The French nation, as regards the teaching of English and German, has answered this question in the negative. In Paris the teaching of English is intrusted to Frenchmen. In visiting eight of the largest French *lycées*, I met but one native English teacher, and she was permitted to teach permanently only because she had been naturalized. French is taught in Germany by Germans with most excellent results. Professor Walter of Frankfurt, who evidently does not talk like a Frenchman, succeeds in getting a very superior pronunciation from his pupils. Professor Vietor of Marburg gives his students of English a pronunciation which is almost impeccable. We fear that M. Locard's statement will scarcely bear comprehensive examination. Pronunciation is not contagious; a little knowledge of the science of phonetics easily turns the balance against the native teacher. Then, too, the native teacher is generally entirely lacking in any scientific preparation for this work.

M. Locard also expresses a horror for the phonetic symbols. Again is he at variance with the practices of his own country. These very symbols are practically the contribution of the energetic and progressive French race to linguistic advancement. In Germany excellent results

are obtained by the use of the phonetic symbols. In England in many schools the ordinary orthography is laid aside during the first year. Professor Savory and Miss Parkington have been the pioneers in this movement. Professor Walter of Frankfurt and Professor Glaser of Marburg have adopted this plan, though not to so great an extent as in England. Of course if this method is in the hands of any other than an absolute master of the science, the enterprise is doomed in advance. Finally, the most up-to-date English series published in Paris, that of Professor Camerlynck, of the Lycée Saint Louis, uses the phonetic symbols to immense advantage. Can we then reasonably conclude that these phonetic symbols are grotesque and barbarous when the three most enlightened nations have embraced them as aids to efficiency?

What is the most advisable method of teaching French? We agree most decidedly that to teach pure conversational French is unwise. But M. Locard fails to discuss satisfactorily the question of teaching the very grammar he prizes so highly, by means of the spoken French. With grammar as an aim and spoken French as a means, can we not develop a method which is both effective and durable at the same time?

Learning irregular feminines of adjectives out of the book is pure drudgery, but when the teacher points out "*une nouvelle cravate*," or "*une belle robe*," or "*une vieille maison*," the application vivifies the word. The verb in action is almost an entirely different word from the dead, colorless vocable beside an English word. The use of such a method does not in any way preclude the possibility of laying solid grammatical foundations nor of showing very clearly the basic principles of the language.

If we adopt M. Locard's suggestion to let the high-school student of French revel in the delights of "comparative philology," and find "intellectual enjoyment in Latin quotations and etymological study derived therefrom, and in the careful analysis of each part of speech and in the discussion of the logical construction of every sentence," we may be sure that such a diet at the high-school age is bound to produce intellectual nausea.

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